Supporting Students Recovering from Concussion

A Desktop Guide for Educators

Most students will typically deal with symptoms for 2-4 weeks following a concussion. Some will need months or even longer to fully recover - every concussion is different, so the adjustments needed will vary. This desktop guide offers information about post-concussion symptoms and gives you the tools you need to make adjustments in your classroom so that your students are academically successful and emotionally supported during their recovery.

### Adjustments for the Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>Possible Adjustments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity to Light</td>
<td>Seat away from windows, dim lights, allow student to wear sunglasses/hat in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity to Noise</td>
<td>Avoid loud settings: lunch room, pep rallies, etc.; allow student to leave class 3-5 mins early</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Fatigue/Feeling Foggy</td>
<td>Simplify tasks, frequent breaks during any mental tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty Concentrating on School Work</td>
<td>Separate work time into 10-15 min chunks w/ breaks between tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty Paying Attention to Teacher</td>
<td>Seat proximity to Teacher, allow student to work in a quiet room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty Remembering</td>
<td>Provide notes and memory aides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty Staying Organized</td>
<td>Use to do lists, agendas/planners, use calendar in student’s phone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A - Allow time for your student’s brain to heal
D - Determine how you can adjust class and home assignments
J - Just being understanding and caring makes a HUGE Difference
U - Understand brain injuries are invisible
S - Sense that your student has a shorter “battery” life until their brain heals
T - Talk to your student about what’s working and what’s not
Supporting students during their recovery is more than just classroom adjustments. They also need emotional support to stay on track. You can help by checking in with them at least twice a week to talk about how they’re doing physically, academically and emotionally. If you’re concerned about worsening symptoms or excessive anxiety, talk to the school nurse, guidance counselor and/or school administration.

**Further Considerations**
- Students may need to attend school part time, e.g., half days alternating with morning and afternoon classes.
- Tests and quizzes may need to be postponed if a student is unable to prepare for or tolerate the assessment due to their injury or symptoms.
- Prioritize assignments and remove work that is not essential.
- Help students recovering from concussion feel supported during recovery.

**Emotional Support**
Supporting students during their recovery is more than just classroom adjustments. They also need emotional support to stay on track. You can help by checking in with them at least twice a week to talk about how they’re doing physically, academically and emotionally. If you’re concerned about worsening symptoms or excessive anxiety, talk to the school nurse, guidance counselor and/or school administration.

**Resources**
Brain Injury Association of New York State: www.bianys.org
CDC Heads UP: www.cdc.gov/headsup/index.html
Upstate Concussion Center: www.upstate.edu/concussion
Get Schooled on Concussions: www.getschooledonconcussions.com/tip-sheets/